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National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency discusses imaging science on Capitol Hill

SPRINGFIELD, Va. -- NGA leaders met with Rochester Institute of Technology representatives Dec. 3 to discuss partnerships and strengthening the intelligence community's imaging science workforce by increasing the number of people formally trained.

Discussions took place at NGA and during a panel on Capitol Hill hosted by U.S. Rep. Louise Slaughter of New York's 25th congressional district.

NGA depends on research from academia to develop technologies such as advanced materials for computing, predictive analysis and activity based intelligence, said Lenora Gant, Ph.D., NGA's senior advisor for outreach in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM, during the Capitol Hill panel.

"These are the things we want schools to think about for us," said Gant, "It is our academic apparatus that helps us fill our agencies with our next generations of talent."

The panel included leaders from industry and academia who encouraged reaching out to high schools to introduce geospatial technologies and image science concepts, which focus on the creation and extraction of information from an image.

"In some cases we need to get to the high school level to prime the pump to promote the need for these skill sets," said Frank Avila, senior scientist in NGA's Analysis directorate.
As the technology expands, it is imperative to develop more sustainable analytic methods, said David Messinger, director of the Digital Imaging and Remote Sensing Laboratory at RIT.

"Imaging science is moving in a direction that is not slowing down," said Messinger, who urged a focused relationship between government and academia to build a stronger workforce over time.

Rep. Slaughter thanked the panel for their support and said the success of national security depends on the U.S.'s ability to expand the imaging science workforce within the intelligence community.

"If we are going to realize the true promise of this groundbreaking technology, we have to train significantly more students to enter the remote sensing field," said Slaughter.

RIT officials also visited NGA's Springfield, Va. campus to discuss developing a workforce with the technical skills needed to support the defense and intelligence communities.

NGA Deputy Director Michael Rodrigue spoke about the need to recruit qualified graduates in STEM fields, emphasizing thinking outside of the box and looking to the skills and abilities of the next generation of scientists and analysts.

Senior leadership from NGA's human resources and R&D directorates also participated in the meeting, connecting with RIT representatives and discussing further partnership and recruiting efforts.

RIT President Bill Destler called NGA an attractive destination for the university's students.

"There is an opportunity here to grow this workforce and try to support each other and the advancement of the science," said Destler.

Nancy McGillicuddy and Jason Moll are staff writers for NGA's Office of Corporate Communications

About NGA
The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency delivers world-class geospatial intelligence that provides a decisive advantage to policymakers, warfighters, intelligence professionals and first

responders. Both an intelligence agency and combat support agency, NGA enables the U.S. intelligence community and the Department of Defense to fulfill the president's national security priorities. NGA also is the lead federal agency for GEOINT and manages a global consortium of more than 400 commercial and government relationships. NGA is headquartered in Springfield, Va., and has two major locations in St. Louis and Arnold, Mo. Hundreds of NGA employees serve on support teams at U.S. military, diplomatic and allied locations around the world. For more information about NGA, visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NatlGEOINTAgency, on Twitter at https://twitter.com/nga_GEOINT.

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